AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 13, line 5 as follows:

-- A second embodiment of a surgical retraction apparatus according to the present invention is shown in Figs. 5A and 5B. In this second embodiment, the rack and pinion interfaces of the apparatus of Figs. 1 - 3C are substituted with cable assemblies mounted within the housing (e.g., housing part 12B'). The cable assemblies ~~that~~ are pulled around stationary posts to effectuate retraction of the retraction members. As shown, the cable assemblies include cables 51A, 51B, 51C, 51D, 51E whose ends are fixable attached to respective first connectors 52A, 52B, 52C, 52D, 52E and second connectors 54A, 54B, 54C, 54D, 54E. The first connectors 52A, 52B, 52C, 52D, 52E are mounted about the circumference of the sun gear 22', while the second connectors 54A, 54B, 54C, 54D, ~~56E~~ 54E are mounted to the segments 18A', 18B', 18C', 18D', 18E' of the retraction members 14A', 14B', 14C', 14D', 14E' preferably along a centerline of the segments as shown. Stationary posts (or pulleys) 56A, 56B, 56C, 56D, 56E are disposed in respective slots 58A, 58B, 58C, 58D, 58E in the segments 18A', 18B', 18C', 18D', 18E'. The cables 51A, 51B, 51C, 51D, 51E slide along the pulleys as the ring gear 22' is rotated in the clockwise-direction to thereby pull the segments 18A', 18B', 18C', 18D', 18E' and the corresponding retraction arms 16A', 16B', 16C', 16D', 16E' in the radial direction away from the central axis. The ring gear 22' is driven by rotation of a drive gear 24B and spline 20 in response to user rotation of a knob or arm attached to the spline 20 as described above. In this manner, user rotation of the knob or arm effectuates retraction of retraction arms 16A', 16B', 16C', 16D', 16E' in the radial direction away from the central axis. Fig. 5A illustrates the surgical retraction apparatus in its non-retracted "closed" configuration. In this configuration, the retraction arms

form a substantially-closed tube-shaped structure about the central axis 17 similar to that shown in Fig. 2C. Fig. 5B illustrates the surgical retraction apparatus in its fully-retracted "open" configuration. In this configuration, the retraction arms are radially disposed about the central axis 17 to form pieces of a broken tube-shaped structure similar to that shown in Fig. 3C. As is evident, the diameter of the broken-tube shaped structure formed by the retractor arms in the "open" configuration is significantly larger than the diameter of the tube-shaped structure formed by the retractor arms in the "closed" configuration. The retraction arms may be moved radially toward the central axis (and retracted from the fully-retracted "open" position to the "closed" position) by manually applying force to the retraction arms to move them in this radial direction. Such movement pulls the cables 51A, 51B, 51C, 51D, 51E in the radial direction toward the central axis and causes the cables to slide along the stationary posts and rotate the ring gear 22' in the counter-clockwise direction to the "closed" configuration shown in Fig. 5A.

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Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 14, line 17 as follows:

-- A third embodiment of a surgical retraction apparatus according to the present invention is shown in Figs. 6A and 6B. In this third embodiment, the rack and pinion interfaces of the apparatus of Figs. 1 - 3C are substituted with lever arms mounted within the housing (e.g., housing part 12B"). The lever arms ~~that~~ effectuate retraction of the retraction members. As shown, the ends of lever arms 60A, 60B, 60C, 60D, 60E are mounted about the circumference of the sun gear 22" and about the segments 18A", 18B", 18C", 18D", 18E" preferably along a centerline of the segments as shown. The lever arms 60A, 60B, 60C, 60D, 60E rotate as the ring gear 22" is rotated in the counter-clockwise-direction to thereby translate the segments 18A",

18B", 18C", 18D", 18E" and the corresponding retraction arms 16A", 16B", 16C", 16D", 16E" in the radial direction away from the central axis. Similarly, the lever arms 60A, 60B, 60C, 60D, 60E counter-rotate as the ring gear 22" is rotated in the clockwise-direction to thereby translate the segments 18A", 18B", 18C", 18D", 18E" and the corresponding retraction arms 16A", 16B", 16C", 16D", 16E" in the radial direction toward the central axis. The ring gear 22" is driven by rotation of a drive gear and spline in response to user rotation of a knob or arm attached to the spline as described above. In this manner, user rotation of the knob or arm effectuates retraction of retraction arms 16A", 16B", 16C", 16D", 16E" in the radial direction away from (and towards) the central axis. Fig. 6A illustrates the surgical retraction apparatus in its non-retracted "closed" configuration. In this configuration, the retraction arms form a substantially-closed tube-shaped structure about the central axis 17 similar to that shown in Fig. 2C. Fig. 6B illustrates the surgical retraction apparatus in its fully-retracted "open" configuration. In this configuration, the retraction arms are radially disposed about the central axis 17 to form pieces of a broken tube-shaped structure similar to that shown in Fig. 3C. As is evident, the diameter of the broken-tube shaped structure formed by the retractor arms in the "open" configuration is significantly larger than the diameter of the tube-shaped structure formed by the retractor arms in the "closed" configuration.

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